

Aubrey Buxton defended the documentary approach on the ground that the need was to reach and interest the general public. His claim that sounds could be added afterwards was later challenged.

Jeffery Boswall summed up the general feeling by advocating a code of conduct ensuring that no cruelty or unreasonable disturbance were involved in film-making and that nothing inaccurate was shown on the screen.

The addition of a sound-track later, especially where bird-calls were concerned, was aired in the general discussion. A plea was made for film producers to bear in mind the effect that discovery of deception could have on the young naturalist.

## The size of the sexes in the African Lily-trotter *Actophilornis africanus* (Gmelin)

by C. J. O. HARRISON

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In a paper on the African Lily-trotter *Actophilornis africanus*, Cunningham-Van Someren and Robinson (1962) disagree with other authors concerning the sizes of birds of different sexes. They state “. . . the female, the bird that incubates the eggs, is the smaller bird”. Miller (1931) found that in the American Jacana *Jacana spinosa* the smaller male incubates the eggs and cares for the young. Hoffman (1949) describes this for the Water Pheasant *Hydrophasianus chirugus* which is a polyandrous species. An examination of the skins of *Actophilornis africanus* in the British Museum (Natural History) reveals that in sexed specimens the males are the smaller birds. It would appear that in this species, as in other Jacanidae, the females are larger and more brightly coloured, and the male incubates the eggs and cares for the young.

### References:

- Cunningham-Van Someren, G. R. and Robinson C. 1962. Notes on the African Lily-trotter *Actophilornis africanus* (Gmelin) *Bull. B.O.C.* 82: 67-72.  
 Hoffman, A. 1949. Über die Brutpege des polyandrischen Wasserfasans, *Hydrophasianus chirugus* (Scop.) *Zool. Jahrb. (Systematik)* 78: 367-403.  
 Miller, A. H. 1931. Observations on the incubation and care of the young in the Jacana. *Condor* 33: 32-3.

## Abnormal white, yellow and fawn plumages

by NOBLE ROLLIN

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A pale Blue Tit, *Parus caeruleus*, observed at close quarters in the field, was found to have the head, wings and tail white, the back, rump, scapulars and under parts yellow. Apart from some very small marks near the bill, the plumage was devoid of melanin pigment. The bird was dark-eyed. As the normal Blue Tit is largely blue and white on the head, blue on the wings and tail, absence of melanin in these parts simply left white in the abnormal bird. The back of the normal being green, due to the suffusion of brown and black melanins with yellow, in the abnormal bird without melanin, only yellow remained. The normal under parts having no melanin to begin with, the breast of the abnormal bird remained as before, yellow.